

14 of the selected one of the M output optical fibers having the ferrule surrounding its end portion
16 means for moving the ferrules relative to the stages along a plurality of Z axes
18 input and output optical fibers.

Please add new Claims 26-28 as follows:

26. The switch of Claim 20 and further comprising spring means for biasing the ferrules to mated positions.
27. The switch of Claim 20 wherein the holes in the central panel are tapered to facilitate alignment and insertion of the ferrules into the holes.
28. The switch of Claim 20 wherein the means for moving the ferrules includes a plurality of solenoid actuators.

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the application as amended is requested. A readily apparent typographical error, namely, two consecutive periods, has been corrected on page 6, line 16.

In the first Office Action, Claims 1-6, 8, 9, and 11-24 were rejected for anticipation over published Japanese Patent No. JP406258584A of Kobayashi et al. Claim 1 has been amended to require "a plurality of collimating lenses, each for transmitting a beam of light between aligned input and output fibers." Kobayashi et al. has no such lenses, and accordingly, withdrawal of the anticipation rejection of Claim 1, along with Claims 2, 4, 5 and 8 which depend therefrom, is requested. Similarly, Claim 11 has been amended to require "collimating each beam of light between aligned input and output fibers." Once again, Kobayashi et al. does not disclose this method step, and accordingly, withdrawal of the anticipation rejection of Claim 11, along with Claims 12 and 16-18 which depend therefrom, is requested. Claim 20 has

been amended to require “means for moving the ferrules *relative to* the stages along a plurality of z axes generally perpendicular to the X and Y axes to mate and un-mate the facets of the selected input and output optical fibers.” (emphasis added). In Kobayashi et al., the z-axis motion mechanism 17 moves the drive pulley 14, follower pulley 15, and drive wire 16, which collectively form a stage, along with the ferrule 12. Accordingly, withdrawal of the anticipation rejection of Claim 20 over Kobayashi et al. is requested. In the first Office Action, Claims 7, 10 and 25 were rejected for alleged obviousness over Kobayashi et al. However, these rejections are moot as these claims have now been canceled.

The subject application is believed to be in condition for allowance and notification to this effect is solicited. No additional fee is due at this time.

Respectfully submitted,

 4/21/03

By: Michael H. Jester
Attorney for Applicants
Registration No. 28,022